
*
* THE OLD MAN *
* written by *
*
* JOHNNIE SPEER *
*

THE OLD MAN

(THE SHOW STARTS WITH A COMPLETELY BLACK STAGE. VOICES ARE HEARD OFF CENTER)

Mrs

Well quit fumbling and open the door. Its cold out here.

Jim

Well, now, wait until I find the blamed key for you holler.

Mrs

Well it doesn't take you all day, does it.

Jim

I've got it now. (noise like somone scrach a key around the door trying to find the key hole) Now where's the key hole.

Mrs

Oh Jim Morris, I never saw the likes of you in all my life. You're the most helpless human being that ever lived.

Jim

Well if you can find a key hole in the dark, you're smarter than the man who discovered America, and they do say he was perty bright.

Mrs

Well hurry up.

Jim

I've got it now (key turns and the door opens)

Mrs

Now turn on the light.

Jim

I will if I can find it. Somebody moved the switche now. (loud crash and he stumbles and falls) Oh, that damn stool! Oh My shin!

Mrs

What did you do, fall?

Jim

Yes, over that blamed stool. Why did youleaf e it setting in the middle of the room like that? Turn on the light.

Mrs

Oh you helpless bld gorilla you (turns on light) You can't do a single solitary thing.

Jim

(sitting on the floor beside stool holding his chin and groaning)
I'm gonna burn that stool in the furnace.

Mrs

You'll do nothing of the kind. My mother sent that to me.

Jim

I always did like your motherm(grits teeth)

Mrs

Well get up and go put some linement on it. And this is the last time I ever go to a picture show with you.

Jim

(getting up) Why what did I do?

Mrs

Laughted right in the middle of that beautiful love scene.

Jim

That was funny! Them two lovers made me sick, That was a rotten picture.

Mrs

It was not. That just shows how much you know about art. That was the best picture they ever showed at the Little Grand.

Jim

"Flaming Love" Thats a heck of a name for a picture. I knew it wasn't going to be any good when I saw that title. Why

didn't you wait and go next week. Tom Mix is going to be there then.

Mrs

I don't like those western pictures with all that shootin in 'em.

Jim

Naw, you'd rather see some slick haired shiek grab some blonde vampire and bite a chunk out of her neck. Every time that guy looked at the heroine in the picture he began to pant like a Rock Island Switch engine going up a hill with a hundred freight cars on its tail end.

Mrs

Oh shut up, you fish. I wish I had somebody to go places with. I'd leave you at home with the cat.

Jim

Well I'd rather stay home than see that junk.

Mrs

I wonder where Betty is. I left her here sewing on her dress!

Jim

I suppose she went to /v/v/ bed.

Mrs

(turns around and sees Betty and Ted with their arm around each sitting on the sofa which is facing the back of the set. They are both asleep) Jim, look there. Bed nothing!

Jim

Well I'll be dadburned. Its Ted Norton.

Mrs

(going over to them and shaking them) Wake up! q Betty, what do you mean?

Betty

(jumping up quick) Oh Mother!

Mrs

Now aint you two good? How did you get over here?

Ted

I----I---er---just came over Mrs Morris.

Mrs

Well, you can just take your hat and beat it. I've told you before that Betty is not allowed to associate with the likes of you.

Betty

Now, mother, Ted's all right. He's got a good job now, and he's going to be somebody.

Mrs

Be somebody. He never was and he never will be anything but a tramp. You thought you were pulling something over on me. What do you mean by haging the lights out like this.

Betty

Well the moon was----

Mrs

The moon was shining and you wanted to sit in the dark and slush kisses.

Betty

We were talking about the future.

Mrs

Must have been a bright future you were talking about; you both went to sheep.

Ted

Mrs Morris, please don't be angry.

Mrs

I'll be angry if I want to.

Jim

Now, ma don't be so hard on the kids.

Mrs

You shut up!

Jim

(turns around) Yes mam. (falls over the stool) Theres that stool again.

Mrs

Well look where you're stepping and you won't be falling over it so many times.

Jim

I don't see why you keep itp it aint any good.

Mrs

You don't knoww anything about it (to Ted) Well don't stand there and gap at me. Put ~~your~~ hat on and play like your a train. Pull out and don't leave your cabbosse behind.

Betty

Mother, he has something to say to you.

Mrs

Well I don't care to hear it.

Betty

But this is good news.

Mrs

Is somebody going to shoot him or something.

Betty

No, he's working for the same firm dad does now

Ted

And I've got a chance to work up.

Mrs

Work up, my foot! Your fathers bean with the Devoe Bond Company for ten years and he's still ~~with~~ in the same postion he started. They haven't even raised his salary.

Jim

No, but then old man Devoe said---

Mrs

You keep out of this. You're always telling me what old man Devoe said. He never said a word.

Ted

Well I think that I've got a chance to really get somewhere in his office.

Mrs

Well I don't care if you get to be the ~~Zar~~ ~~of~~ ~~Zar~~ of Russia.

Ted

But I thought maybe your would let Betty and I get married.

Mrs

Well you've got another think coming. I wouldn't let Betty marry you if you was gold plated, and set in diamonds.

Jim

Now, just what have you got against the boy, Ma?

Mrs

Thats none of your business. Betty's only eighteen and thats too young to get married. She should wait until she's older and has had a chance to take her pick of a dozen or so men. I married when I was too young, and I've regretted it ever since.

Jim

Well, I don't see why you've always had three square meals a day.

Mrs

Yes, but I had to cook them myself. I never get to go anywhere or see anybody. Betty's young and good looking she may meet

somebody with lots of money.

Betty

I won't do it. I'm going to marry Ted or else be an old maid.

Mrs

Well, you'd better just go get you a parrot and a cat and start being an old maid, because you're not going to marry Ted Norton as long I've got anything to say about it.

Jim

There's no use arguing Betty, she will have her way.

Mrs

You bet your life I will/ (opens door) Now you beat it, young man, and stay beat.

Ted

But Mrs---

Mrs

I SAID GO.

Ted

(exits) I'm gone.

Betty

Oh mother!

Mrs

Hush up, I'm going to bed. And you hurry up and go to bed to Jim, You've got to get up in the morning, and it's late now. (exit)

Jim

All right, darling. (starts and stumbles over the stool) Oh, that stool! (throws it over by R door)

Betty

Oh, daddy, can't you say something to mother?

Jim

I could, but it wouldn't do any good. She's made up her mind she don't like Ted and that's the end of him.

Betty

Well it's not the end of him, because I'm going to marry whether mother says so or not.

Jim

Well, now daughter, what if I objected?

Betty

Oh, that's all right. It's mother that worries me. Her word is the impassable barrier.

Jim

Well, what about your father's word, Betty?

Betty

It's all right, but you're just dad, Mother is the Head of the Family. (exits)

Jim

And father is the tail light. I mean about as much around here as a dew drop on the ocean. I'm just the old man that's all. The funny faced duck who pays the bills. (starts to exit)(falls over the stool) There's that blamed stool again.

Mrs

(off stage) Jim! Put the cat out, wind the clock, turn out the light, -fix the furnace, shut down that window in there and come to bed.

Jim

After I've done all of that. It will be morning. Oh well (turns out light)

Mrs

Are you coming?

Jim

Yes my love (crash) Damn that stool!

***** NUMBER *****

Betty
(enters and X's to window and gazes out)

Mrs
(enters with dishes for table) Well, what are you doing? Dreaming about your handsome lover with the one celled brain.

Betty
Mother, Ted has more than one cell in his brain.

Mrs
He has not. He hasn't even got a brain. You don't see your father coming down the street do you.

Betty
NO.

Mrs
Well I wish he'd hurry. He's bring the boss home to eat dinner, and the grocery boy hasn't brought the vegetables that I ordered. I've got to have a real good dinner as your father thinks old man Devoe is going to promote him.

Betty
Won't that be just lovely?

Mrs
Well you're pa's got it coming to him. He's worked long enough for the Old man, but then your father aint just real bright or he 'd of been somewhere long before this. I wish I'd of married Mr Devoe his boss.

Betty
Could you?

Mrs
Sure I could. I went with old man Devoe for a long time, but I never tho ght he would amount to anything, and he never was the affectionate kind of lover your pa was.

Betty
Was father a good lover, m ther?

Mrs
Was he? Say twenty years ago your paw was the hottest man in town. Any shiek in the movies could have taken lessons from him. Oh how he could love. I like a little fool fell for it, and married him.

Betty
Father is very kind, mother.

Mrs
Oh he's all right as long as he don't get in the way, but just think. Here he is a man reachang his fifties soon and he's just a common ordinary clerk working for the man that I could have married. At one time he and old Devoe were working right side by side as clerks---now look at the difference.

Betty
Danial Devoe is one of the wealthiest men in town. Does he ~~now~~ ever speak to you.

Mrs
I've never seen him to speak to him for ages, child. I don't suppose he'll hardly know me. But then theres one thing certain he can't say that I've aged so much, now can he?

Betty
Why no, mother, you're the youngest old woman in town.

Mrs
Old woman, I like that. To hear you talk you'd think I was so old I had false teeth and hair. (looks out window) Oh they aren't here yet. Well I'm glad I wish that grocery boy would hurry though.

Betty

Betty

They've got a new grocery boy now, mother.

Mrs

How do you know?

Betty

I---er heard them say so at the store this morning.

Mrs

Well, he's starting out mighty poor I'll say that. That Ted Norton ain't been over for several days, has he?

Betty

Not since you talked so terrible to him that night.

Mrs

Well, I want him to stay away from you. He's just like your father. One of them monks is that's full of love but no brains. You'd be a poor starved house wife like me all of your life if you married him. You wait until some cold hard hearted man comes along, and then marry him and you'll be wearing diamonds before long.

Betty

I don't care, I love Ted, and that's all there is to it.

Ted

(off stage) Grocery!

Mrs

There's the grocery boy at last. (opens door) Well come on in this way and put them on the table.

Ted

(enters with box of groceries cap pulled down over his face)
Yes mam.

Mrs

Are you the new grocery boy?

Ted

Yes mam'

Mrs

Say take that cap off. Who are you?

Ted

(takes off cap and grins) Howdy, Mrs Morris.

Mrs

You!

Betty

Yes, Ted decided to go into the grocery business.

Mrs

Say, just what would a person have to do to get rid of you?

Ted

It's been tried by experts.

Mrs

Well I give up. (takes vegetables to the other room) I suppose if I jumped down the sewer you'd be in after me, wouldn't you.

Ted

No, not unless Betty went along.

Mrs

Well, go peddle your groceries. (exits R)

Betty

Ted, mother doesn't think much of you.

Ted

I hardly thought she did.

Betty

But I do.

Ted

That's all I care for. Gee, Betty, let's you and me run away and get married.

Betty
How are we going to do it?

Ted
Listen, I'll sneak the grocery truck out tonight, and we'll drive over on the West side, and have the marriage ceremony performed, then we'll come and tell them all about, and they can't any more than kill us.

Betty
But where would we live after we were married?

Ted
I've found the keenest little apartments, and cheap too.

Betty
Oh Honest.

Ted
Sure, what do you say?

Betty
I'm with you, Ted.

Ted
All right then, tonight.

Mrs
(enters) What you still here, (has carving knife) You get!

Ted
You bet! (exits)

Betty
Mother, why are you so unreasonable?

Mrs
You shut your face, and look for your father.

Betty
(goes to window) Hefe he comes now.

Mrs
Gbbd. Mr Devoe with him?

Betty
Yes.

Mrs
Now if your father only knows how to act. I told him that everytime I kicked him under the table, that he was doing something wrong.

Betty
Father no doubt will be quite out of place.

Mrs
The only place he's at home is in a pig pen.

Jim
(off stage) Come right on in, Mr Devoe. They're all here. Wife and daughter both. (they enter) Wifie, you remember Mr Devoe.

Danial
(going to her) Well, I should say she does.

Mrs
Oh yes---how are you Danial ---I mean Mr Devoe.

Danial
Go ahead and call me Danial or just Dan---like you used to.

Jim
Well, dearie, what have you got to eat. I told the boss what a good cook you were.

Danial
You haven't changed much, have you, Mary?

Mrs
(flattered) Oh don't you think so.

Danial
I should say not, if I weren't arraid your husband would object I'd steal you from him. (laugh)

Mrs
Why he wouldn't even miss me (laugh)

Danila
Really, I can't get over how charming you have become in all of these years.

Mrs
You don't seem to have aged much yourself, Danial.

Danial
Aged? I'm the spryest man in my employment. None of them can get ahead of me.

Jim
(All of the time has been trying to say to the boss something about business, just work it up) Now I was saying---

Mrs
Oh Jim, go sit down in the corner you're bothering us.

Danial
Yes, please do.

Jim
(meekly) Well all right---but what I was gonna say---

Danial
You may tell me after awhile. Mary, you haven't introduced me to your daughter.

Mrs
Oh Yes. Betty this is Mr Danial Devoe my old----well----(giggle)

Danial
Better say sweetheart because I was.

Mrs
We used to have some wonderful times together.

Jim
You never said much about that to me, wifie.

Mrs
Silly, I wouldn't tell you that of course. I have some secrets that I hold dear to my heart naturally.

Danial
Your daughter is just the image of you, Mary.

Mrs
Yes, they do say she is a beautiful girl (clear throat giggle)

Jim
Mary, I tell you---

Mrs
Jim, behave yourself. (smell) Why I believe my meat is burning.

Jim
Believe heck, I've been trying to tell you that for the last half hour.

Mrs
Jim, do you mean to tell me you sat there and let that meat burn all this time without saying a word. Oh dear, you're a pest. Excuse me, Danial. Just make yourself at home (exit)

Danila
Certainly. (smiling) By jove, do you know I glad I came over here tonight.

Jim
Yes, I noticed that.

Danial
We shall have to take in a show after dinner tonight. Don't you think we should? (to Betty)

Betty
I'm sure m ther would like to go, Mr Devoe, but I have an engagement already.

Danial
Thats too bad. I'd like to take you both.

Betty

Mother, Mr Devoe is going to give Ted a wonderful position

Mrs

Really!

Betty

Yes, aren't you Mr Devoe.

Danial

You bet I am.

Mrs

Thats nice. Dan, have some potatoes. (gives him potatoes and after Betty and her take some, she sets the dish in the middle of the table. Jim slowly meekly reaches over with fork and tries to get a potato. Mrs kicks at him, but always hits Danial. Danial registers surprise then passes it up) Have some bread, Dan. (passes bread same bus. Jim tries to reach for it and she kicks Dan)

Betty

Father has a terrible appetite.

Mrs

Like some animal. I can't understand him at time.

Jim

Well I didn't have any lunch today, you know.

Mrs

Why didn't you. You had money in your pocket/

Jim

Yes, but that quarter you gave me this morning dropped out and went in the sewer.

Mrs

Well you had money besides that, Jim (motions for him to keep quiet)

Jim

Well you know you only give me- --

Mrs

is, do you want him. Danial
was just saying if you would like to see a show tonight, Mary.

Mrs

Oh I certainly would.

Jim

Hoot Gibson is on at the Star.

Mrs

Jim (kicks Dan again)

Jim

What?

Mrs

You know better than that.

Jim

No better than waht? He is there. I saw the bill advertised.

Mrs

Mr Devoe doesn't mean a movie, he means a real show up town.

Jim

I wouldn't mind seein ' a real good gal show once again. Been fifteen years since I saw one.

Mrs

Jim, don't start a boring conversation. Let Me do the talking please.

Jim

You usually do. (starts to reach for a piece of bread just as Danial is lifting some food to his mouth. Jim's arm goes right in front of Danial's face and he takes a bite out of his arm)

Jim

Now, you know Mr Devoe, about them stocks, we had made up---

Danial

Oh forget them, Jim. We'll talk business some other time.

Jim

But it seems a shame to me that such a mistake should made. If I were ---er in that department I could---

Danial

Well, you may be there some day. You've been with me a long time I know that--

Jim

I've been with you ten years, Mr Devoe.

Danial

Thats an awful long time. You're getting pretty old

Jim

It takes a long time to really learn the business, Mr Devoe.

Danial

It does at that, but then I believe in letting the young folks get ahead as much as they can. I'm going to put a young fellow who applied for a position the other day in the department you were talking of. He looks young and brilliant.

Jim

But he's had no experience in that line.

Danial

Oh he'll learn. I've have great hopes for him.

Jim

Who is he?

Danial

Young man by the name of Ted Norton.

Betty

Ted!

Jim

Betty

I should say I do. Oh Mr Devoe, please give him the job, then we can get married.

Danial

Don't worry I'm going to.

Betty

Oh daddy, isn't that just wonderful?

Jim

(slowly) Yes----Ted is a lucky boy.

Mrs

(enters with things for the table) Well, lets all sit down now. Mr Devoe,---I mean Danial---Dan, you mustn't be too critical with my dinner.

Danial

If you cooked it, I know its all O K.

Mrs

Flatterè (she sets everything) Now Dan, you sit right here. (places him) Betty you sit there, and I'll sit here. (they sit down) Oh, I forgot, Jim you're here.

Jim

Yes.

Mrs

Well pull that chair up. This table is a little small.

(They all sit down Jim is seated down close to front opposite Mrs he folds his legs so that the audience can see that they are not under the table. Danial sits facing the audience next to Betty, and Mrs)

Mrs

(kicks him three or four times. Danial doesn't know what to think)

Betty

Father, I'll hand you some bread. (passes plate)

Jim

I expect you'd better. Gimme some of that soup too (takes some and begins lapping it loudly. They all look at him with disgust) (stops all of a sudden) Good soup!

Danial

It sounds good.

Mrs

(kick him and mug with desperation)

Jim

(picks up tea cup drinks and then spits it out) Whew! Thats hot!

Mrs

Jim!

Betty

Father!

Jim

(pours it in cup) Well it is. (drinks out of cup)

Mrs

You must excuse him, Mr Devoe (gives a violent kick)

Danial

(rising) Really I think I'll have to ask to be excused. (rubs shins)

Mrs

Betty, takes Mr Dan in the sitting room, will you. Play the victrola.

Jim

You aint full yet are you, Dan?

Danial

I'm satisfied. Thank you. (rubs shins)

Betty

Riht this way, Mr Devoe (they exit Danial limps off)

Jim

I'll be in there in a minute. I'm still hungry.

Mrs

(going to him and rolling her sleeves up) Jim Morris, you-- you---

Jim

Did I do something wrong, dearm (innocently)

Mrs

Oh did you? Why I was never so ashamed and disgraced in all my life, and I told you that whenever I kicked you to stop whatever you were doing. What did you want to tell him that I only gave you a quarter a day to eat lunch on for?

Jim

Well aint it so?

Mrs

Did you need to tell it. And the way you acted. Haven't you any table manners. Don't you know how to act? Didn't I tell you that whenever I kicked you under the table you were to stop whatever you were doing. Didn't you feel me kicking you?

Jim

Kicking me? You never kicked me. My feet weren't under the table.

Mrs

My heavens, I must have kicked Danial then! Oh! (exit)

Jim

Thats better than I could have done. I've been wanting to kick him for ten years. (exit)

***** NUMBER *****

Mrs

(enters with an opera cape followed by Danial) Well we had better be hurrying.

Danial

Yes, the curtain rises at eight thirtysharp.

Mrs

Oh I'm so thrilled. I haven't been to a good show for ---well some time.

Danial

Mary, I'd like to show you the good time that you've missed all of these years.

Mrs

Oh Danial I--

Danial

Now don't deny it. I can see it in the way you act. When you and I were going together years ago, you never thought that someday I'd be the richest man in town, did you?

Mrs

No, but you were never the affectionate lover that I thought you should be, Dan.

Danial

I was too busy trying to climb up the ladder of success. Well I've reached the top now. Now I'm lonely I want somebody to spend my money on.

Mrs

But I couldn't let you---

Danial

Yes you could. I'm going to see you everynight. We're going to see places, and enjoy ourselves. There's no use in your wasting your life away in a place like this. Mary, let me show you a new world, and a new joy. Will you?

Mrs

I want to, Dan.

Jim

(enters with coat on) Well, are we all ready for the show?

Mrs

We? Where do you get that we stuff? You're not going.

Jim

What I?

Mrs

I should say not. Me in evening dress, and you in that suit Jim, you're hopeless.

Jim

Well, my evening dress suit is all moth eaten, Mary or I'd---

Mrs

That will do. You may stay home and keep the cat company. Come along, Dan, or we'll be late. Is your car out in front.

Danial

Yes, are you ready?

Mrs

I'm ready, now Jim don't wait up for me. I won't be home till late. We're going to the Purple Pup after the theatre and dance.

Jim

Purple Pup. What the heck is that a dog kennel of some kind.

Dan

(laughin) Aw, that's a good one.

Mrs

You 'd never know if we told you. Come on Dan.

Jim

No, I suppose not. But Mr Devoe, I wanted to---

Mrs

(enters with an opera cape followed by Danial) Well we had better be hurrying.

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Jim

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Danial

I haven't time to talk business now, Jim. Let it go. Let it go.

Mrs

Good bye, Jim. Remember, don't wait up, (they both exit laughing)

Jim

(standing alone in the C) No, I won't. (takes off coat and puts hat on table) I thought I was going to get to see a show, but I guess I'm not. Doggone it, I even put a new necktie on. (takes off neck tie) Oh well, I'd just as well get my house slippers and be comfortable. (sits down and takes paper) I brought the boss over to talk business, but it didn't do any good. Guess Mary and him will have a good time tonight. I aint jealous! I'm not that foolish! Mary just likes to go out that s all. She don't care nothin' about him. I aint jealous (throws paper down) (paces the room and falls over the stool) Damn that stool! Damn old Danial Devoe. After all these years of working for him, he gives that job to a little pin head like Ted Norton. I could tell him a lot of things he ought to know about his business, but he hasn't sense enough to listen. (walks over the stool again) I'm gonna throw that stool away (starts to door) Maybe I better not. The old lady would kille me. Wonder what they're doing now. I suppose he's hobding her hand in the car. I aint jealous though (kicks stool across room) No I aint jehlous. I don't care if they never come home. I'm just the old man.

Betty and Ted

(enter)

Betty

Dad, we've done it.

Jim

Done what?

Betty

Got married.

Jim

What?

Ted

Please don't be angry, Mr Morris.

Jim

Betty, the old lady will just naturally clean house with all of us.

Betty

She can't do anything. I'm of age, ain't I not.

Jim

Yes, I guess so.

Betty

Ted's got a good job----why, daddy, he'll make more money a week than you will.

Jim

Yes, thats a job I 'd like to have. (half under his breath) God knows I've worked for it.

Betty

Well, aren't you going to congratulate us?

Jim

Yes (takes them by the hands) I hope you all the happiness in the world children.

Ted

You don't mind then,

Jim

Wouldn't do no good if I did. I'm just the old man that pays the bills. I'm not supposed to mind or say anything unless its yes mam, and no sir.

Betty
Come on, Ted, lets go look at our apartment. We're glad your not sore, dad.

Ted
We certainly are.

Jim
Just what would you do, Betty, if I should get sore.

Betty
(laughing) Why daddy?

Jim
What would you do if I said you couldn't marry Ted?

Betty
I'd marry him any way, daddy. (they both exit)

Jim
She would too. Oh well, we can't all have our way. I wonder if my stomach trouble medicine is on the buffet? (goes to look and falls over the stool) Oh, that stool (puts it on a chair) Now maybe it won't be in the way. (goes to buffet) I better take some of this medicine. (takes a bottle off and looks at it) Heres some Accanite. Deadly poison. Wonder if I was dying if I could have my own way. Don't suppose so. Wonder why she has that poison out. (sets it on table) (takes spoon full of stomach medicine and lays it on table) Oooh thats awful stuff. (starts to sit down and lands on stool throws it on floor) Dad burn that stool. (sits down) I aint jealous or anything, but I wonder if Mary does think anything of old man Devos. They used to be sweethearts. (picks up bottle reads) "Deadly poisonous consult doctor of quantity to be taken" If I drank that bottle I'll bet they'd take notice of me for awhile until I kicked the bucket. I'd just as well be dead as live like I am. (looks at bottle shudders and sets it down) But I think keep alive. I ought to take some more of that medicine (reaches for stomach medicine and picks up poison bottle and drinks it) Wheww! Thats stuff is awful. I wonder what there is in it. (looks at bottle) My God! I'm poisoned. No foolin now Wheres the doctor? (gees up and runs for door falls over the stool) Oh my leg (on floor) I've broke my leg and I'm poisoned. I want my wife. I'm getting sick. (holds stomach and rolls on floor)

***** NUMBER *****

Mrs
What on earth are you talking about.

Jim
I'm sick, in fact I'm poisoned.

Mrs
Poisoned! How.

Jim
(points to bottle of poison on table) I drank that and thought it was stomach medicine.

Mrs
(picks it up) What thás. Oh, Dan, what shall we do?

Jim
Get me a nice rosewood coffin, thats about all you can do. But don't let me bother you and Dan. I---I won't die in here, honey. I'll go out ont the back porch with the cat.

Mrs
We've got to do something. Dan, you go get a doctor right now.

Danial
All right (starts)

Jim
No you don't. I'm not going to have any doctor. I'm dying and thats all there is to it. A doctor isn't any good now. I drank that stuff three hours ago, and I can't understand why I aint dead now.

Danial
But a doctor can' help you. I'll get a good one.

Jim
Yeh, if you got one I know it'd be good. What'd you come home so early for? I didn't mean to bother you by getting sick. If you'd been gone another hour you could have called an undertaker.

Mrs
Oh Jim, don't talk like that. I've got a doctor book in there, and it tells about poisoning. I'm going to get it. And dan you go for the doctor. Get the best one in the city. (exit)

Jim
Don't bother, Dan. I'm too far gone. I'm sick. Dan, I---I sore at you. You take Mary, after I'm gone. She's got it coming to her. I used to think that someday I could give her a good time, but I- -- (sits down in chair) I'm sick!

Danial
(repenting) Jim, I'm sorry. I forgot myself. I'll do my best to atone for what I've done. Tomorrow that job is yours.

Jim
Tomorrow. Hell, I'll be dead by then. You're a fine one--- so dad burn kind hearted. I've been working the best years of my life for you, Danial Devoe, and now when my stomach is full of poison, you tell me that tomorrow the job is mine---the job that I've been working years to get. Its mine tomorrow (laughs) Tomorrow, I'll be the devil's clerk. I wonder if they have clerk's in hell? I suppose they do. (grab stomach) Oh I'm sick. I'm posioned.

Danial
I'm going for the doctor. Oh God forgive me for what I've done. Jim, you can't die.

Jim
~~I'll be dead~~ It won't be very handy for you? Mr Devoe. Did you ever stop to realize that I'm the only one in your office that knows about those Gold Market bonds. You lost the records, and I becuse I've got a good memory remembered them from recording. Another thing, you didn't know. Tomorrow, they are going to audit the

Mrs
 "hat? Oh thats the end. Thats the end! (sits down and cries)
 It just seems like everything is happening it at once. You had
 to go and get poisoned, and now she disobeyd me and got married.
 I hope they starve to death. The two little fools!

Jim
 They won't starve to death with the job Ted's got. Oh I'm sick!
 (shakes her hand) Well good bye, Baby.

Mrs
 (crying louder) Jim, now stop it. You're not gonna die.

Jim
 Oh yes, I am.

Mrs
 Jim Morris, if you die, I'll be sore at you for the rest of my
 life.

Betty
 (enters) Mother! (Ted is behind her)

Mrs
 You! Well, what'd you come back for? You're a married woman
 now, don't call me mother.

Betty
 Weo---we--wondered if we couldn't stay here tonight. They wouldn't
 give us a room unless we paid our room rent in advance.

Mrs
 I'm glad of it. You can both sleep in park on a bench. You tramps!

Betty
 (seeing Jim) Why whats the matter, daddy?

Jim
 Oh nothing, Betty. I drank some posion, and the danr stuff had
 a funny effect on me, thats all.

Betty
 Pbison!

Mrs
 See, your poor father dying, youunmarried, and can't get a room
 Oh this is more than I can stand.

Ted
 Can't do something.

Mrs
 Yes.

Ted
 What?

Mrs
 (handing him bottle) Hage some poison.

Jim
 There aint none left, honey. I drank itall.

Danial
 (enters with Doctor Carlton) Heres the Doctor!

Jim
 It aint any use.

Mrs
 Yes it is too. Quick, do something for him doctor, Don't let
 him die.

Doctor
 We'll see. What did you drink?

Jim
 That. (points to bottle)

Doctor
 Deadly poison.

Jim
 It aint killed me yet.

books. The way the books now stand you are fifty two thousand dollars in the red. I know how that can be fixed. I had it all figured up. That what I wanted to tell you tonight, but you were busy.

Danial

Jim, are you telling me the truth?

Jim

You'll find out tomorrow. I'm afraid they could send you to jail for defrauding them. I can see it now, I've been seeing it come on for months. All of the stock holders raging with anger, your business busted Your name in head lines. I wanted to help you, until you got the money back so the books would be straight. I know how to juggle those figures, and we can fool the best of them, but I'm afraid its to late now. I'm sick, I tell you, sick!

Danial

I'm going for the doctor. Jim, for god sake live until tomorrow. You're the most important man in my office. I can't get along with out you. Please don't die.

Jim

(laughing) You go to hell.

Danial

(exits)

Mrs

(enters with a cup) Take this, Jim!

Jim

(musing) Did you hear that? I'm the most important man in his office. I had to drink poison to find that out.

Mrs

Drink this. Its the white of an egg.

Jim

I aint gonna do it. I'm gonna die.

Mrs

Jim, please don't be foolish. Drink this. Danial will have a doctor here in a minute. Jim, Jim, you can't die.

Jim

The devil I can't. I drank poison, Maryk and thats what happens to people when the drink posion. (belches) See! I'm beginning to die already. Oh I'm sick!

Mrs

Jim, you oughtn't to sit that way. Get up and move about. (punks him up) Come on. Walk around.

Jim

Have I got to stand up to die. (walks around and falls over the stool) Thats all right stool, you won't be in my way tomorrow. Wonder if they have stools wher e I'm going?

Mrs

Oh Jim! What'd you go and drink that poison for? You knew it would hurt you.

Jim

Well, I didn't think it would do me any good.

Mrs

What'd you do it for?

Jim

Well, I was in the way. I got tired of being a stick of wood. When you're dead you don't bother any body, and you don't have to worry about being promoted. You won't miss me. Danial will take care of you Mrs---and Ted will take care of Betty,

Mrs

Where is Betty?

Jim

She and Ted went and got married.

Doctor
Sit down here. (feels pulse) Pulse isn't bad.

Jim
It don't hurt me a bit. But I'm sick. My head.

Doctor
+heres there. Its your stomach.

Jim
Yeh, thats where I put the poison.

Doctor
(opens grip takes out some bottles then a knife)

Jim
(gets up and runs for door)

Mrs
Jim, where you going.

Jim
~~They~~ That guy aint gonna carve me!

Doctor
Why of course not. I'm only going to diagnose you.

Jim
If thats what I think it is, you aint.

Doctor
Sit down. (sits him in chair) (uses instrument on his heart and stomach) (takes temperature) Temperature normal.

Mrs
Is there any chance, doctor.

Doctor
Yes, I think so. (looks at Jim) Are you sick?

Jim
Thats for you to find out.

Doctor
How do you feel?

Jim
Sick.

Doctor
(look at him again) I believe I shall ask you folks to leave the room,

Betty
Is it that serious?

Mrs
Oh Jim! Jim, whatever you do, whatever you do---

Jim
"hatever I do---

Mrs
Don't die.

Doctor
Hurry up, leave the patient to me.

Danial
Come on. (they all exit Bett crying and being comforted by Ted, Mrs and Danial exit)

Jim
(looking at the doctor) Well, whats the news?

Doctor
Say, whats theidea?

Jim
Idea of what?

Doctor
You're not poisoned.

Jim
Oh Yes, I am. (shows bottle) I drank that, aint that poison.

Doctor
Yes, but if you drank that you wouldn't be here now.

Mrs

You, you blamed old fool (puts arms around him and cries)

Betty

Oh , ~~daddy~~ isn't there some way that you can live?

Danial

Yes, I don't care what it cost, I'll get it for you.

Jim

Will you?

Danial

I certainly will.

Jim

Then give me a gallon of this. (hold up glass)

Danial

What is it?

Jim

(drink) I'll never tell! Now lets get down to business. If I live, will you give me the job I 've worked for and earned?

Danial

Yes; a thousand times yes.

Jim

Then I'll not die. I wasn't poisoned in the first place.

Mrs

What! Jim Morris have you been lying to me. Oh you old fossil.

Jim

Stop! I'll die if you don't. I'm only living now to do you people a favor, and from now on I'm not jst the old man but I'm Mr James Morris, the most important man in the Devoe office.

Danial

Right you are. Your salary from now on is three hundred a month. I'll make you the head of my clerks.

Ted

but what will I do?

Jim

You can work for me, and believe me son, you'll work.

Betty

Dad's a good boss, Ted.

Mrs

Oh Jim, you're just wonderful, and I love you. I'm so glad you're not poisoned. Jim, from now on I'll do anything that you want me to.

Jim

Will you?

Mrs

Yes.

Jim

(picks up stool) Then throw this damn stool out the window!

FINALE